

EXHIBIT 12

Nanuet: Clarkstown buys Grace Baptist Church

Robert Brum, Rockland/Westchester Journal News

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During a press conference on Oct.3, 2019, Clarkstown Supervisor George Hoehmann announced Clarkstown's acquisition of Grace Baptist Church. (Photo: Carucha L. Meuse/The Journal News)

NANUET — The Town of Clarkstown has closed on its purchase of Grace Baptist Church, hours after a judge signed an order approving the transaction.

The \$4.55 million sale of the 3-acre property on Demarest Avenue was finalized Friday afternoon after state Supreme Court Justice Paul Marx denied a request to delay the purchase.

"Judge Marx ruled that Grace Baptist was within its rights to sell the church and the town completed the deal at 4:30 this afternoon," Clarkstown Supervisor George Hoehmann said. "Residents of Clarkstown are now the owners of this important piece of property that has innumerable possibilities for the town and the revitalization of the hamlet of Nanuet."

[NANUET: New obstacle could block Grace Baptist Church sale \(/story/news/local/rockland/nanuet/2020/01/23/nanuet-grace-baptist-church-sale/4530276002/\)](/story/news/local/rockland/nanuet/2020/01/23/nanuet-grace-baptist-church-sale/4530276002/)

The property has been eyed for senior housing and parking for the Nanuet school district, and Hoehmann said in the coming weeks the town would be evaluating how the property could best serve all residents.



Clarkstown Supervisor George Hoehmann speaks during a press conference where he announced the town of Clarkstown bought Grace Baptist Church in Nanuet on Oct. 3, 2019. (Photo: Carucha L. Meuse/The Journal News)

The judge's ruling was a blow to Ateres Bais Yaakov Academy of Rockland, which filed legal papers seeking to delay the purchase while it pursues a related court action against the town. That legal challenge, which claims that discrimination blocked the academy from obtaining permits to operate a school on the Grace Baptist Property, will continue.

Yehudah Buchweitz, a lawyer for Ateres Bais Yaakov, expressed disappointment with the judge's decision, adding: "We wish (Grace Baptist Church) well and our pursuit of claims against the Town related to their conduct and this property will not cease until Justice is done."

Grace Baptist timeline

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- The more than 150-year-old church went on the market for \$5.9 million in late 2017 as its shrinking congregation sought a smaller home. The property includes two fellowship halls, a pair of sanctuaries, offices and a school.

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Rabbi Aaron Fink, Dean of Ateres Bais Yaakov Academy in New Hempstead March 18, 2019. (Photo: Peter Carr/The Journal News)

- The following year, Ateras Bias Yaakov's plans to buy the campus to accommodate 450 students drew a fierce reaction from neighbors. Their concerns about overcrowding and traffic were described by academy founder Rabbi Aaron Fink as fear of a "hostile invasion" from a Ramapo-based Jewish school.
- Clarkstown subsequently denied the school an operating permit and its Zoning Board of Appeals closed the door on an appeal.
- Fink ran into funding problems and his contract to buy the property fell through when he couldn't close the deal in time.
- The town later stepped in and announced it was buying the church property with an eye toward potential development of senior housing and trict.

Robert Brum is a Rockland County-based reporter and editor. For subscriber-only Rockland County news, visit [offers.lohud.com](https://cm.lohud.com/specialoffer) (<https://cm.lohud.com/specialoffer>) to sign up for a subscription. To subscribe to The Rockland Angle, a nightly email newsletter exclusively for Rockland County news, features and other essential information, visit [lohud.com/newsletters](https://profile.lohud.com/newsletters/manage/) (<https://profile.lohud.com/newsletters/manage/>), check the Rockland Angle" box and submit your email address.

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